Attorney Docket No.: FMCE-P145



In the Drawings:

Please replace original sheet 3 of the drawings with the enclosed replacement sheet 3. In the replacement sheet, Figure 2 has been amended by changing one of the two occurrences of reference number "14" to "64". In addition, Figure 8 has been amended by changing one of the two occurrences of reference number "126" to "122". The Examiner's acceptance of this drawing amendment is respectfully requested.

## Remarks

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has objected to the Abstract because it does not commence on a separate sheet and the sheet on which it is presented includes other parts of the application. In response to this objection, applicants note that the present application was filed under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 371. Therefore, applicants respectfully submit that the presentation of the Abstract in the current application is proper.

Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. In particular, the Examiner states that the specification and drawings do not support the claimed limitation, ". . . comprises a current loop which is routed through each said electrical connector and said central junction. . . ." Claim 19 has been rewritten in independent form and has been further amended to more clearly recite this feature of the invention. In addition, applicants submit that the subject limitation is sufficiently illustrated in Figure 7 and described on page 7, line 29 through page 8, line 8 of the description.

Claims 3-6, 14, 15 and 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention.

With respect to claims 3-6, the Examiner states that insufficient antecedent basis exists for the limitation "the cable unit". Claims 5 and 6 have

been canceled, without prejudice. In addition, claim 1, on which claims 3 and 4 now depend, has been amended to recite the "at least one cable unit" limitation. Therefore, claim 1 now provides an antecedent basis for the limitation "the cable unit" in claims 3 and 4.

With respect to claims 14, 15 and 17-19, the Examiner states that insufficient antecedent basis exists for the limitation "said cable unit". Claims 14, 15 and 18 have been canceled, without prejudice. In addition, claim 17 has been amended to depend from claim 16, which in turn has been amended to recite "at least one cable unit." Therefore, claim 16 now provides an antecedent basis for the limitation "said cable unit" in claim 17. Similarly, claim 19 has been amended to recite the limitation "at least one cable unit".

Claims 1-5, 8-9, 11-18 and 20-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over applicants' admitted prior art ("AAPA") in view of Sitte (U.S. Patent No. 5,469,150). Claims 2, 5, 14, 15 and 18 have been canceled, without prejudice, and claims 1 and 16 (on which the remaining rejected claims depend) have been amended to more clearly distinguish applicants' invention from the prior art.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 5 and 6 in Markush form. Accordingly, claim 1 now requires that the common bus include at least one of an end termination and a repeater removably connectable to the cable unit. Moreover, Sitte does not disclose either of these components. With respect to the end termination, the Examiner states in paragraph 12 of the Office Action that such a feature is disclosed in Figure 1 and in column 15, line 18 to

column 17, line 49 of Sitte. This is clearly not the case, and one would presume that if Sitte did indeed disclose an end termination, it could be cited with more specificity. In addition, none of the components illustrated in Figure 1 is identified as an end termination (see column 7, lines 36-54).

Therefore, claim 1 is clearly patentable over any permissible combination of AAPA and Sitte. Furthermore, since claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 11-13 and 20-22 depend from claim 1, these claims are also patentable over any permissible combination of AAPA and Sitte for the reasons stated above.

Regarding claim 16, which has been rewritten in independent form, applicants dispute the Examiner's contention that Sitte discloses at least two control signal supply cables which are electrically joined at the electrical connector. As shown in Figure 11, Sitte's cable unit includes a T-connector 754 and a cable 760, 762. However, the cable 760, 762 comprises only four wires, and only two of these, namely wires 780 and 782, are signal wires (see column 16, lines 18-21). Moreover, Figure 11 clearly shows that the signal wires 780, 782 are not electrically joined at the T-connector 754. This is most likely due to the fact that one of the wires 780, 782 is a signal supply wire and the other is a signal return wire. In fact, Sitte specifically states that these two wires define a two-wire communication bus (column 16, lines 20-21). Thus, not only does Sitte fail to disclose a cable unit which comprises two control signal supply cables, this patent also fails to disclose two control signal supply cables which are electrically joined at the connector.

Therefore, claim 16 is clearly patentable over any permissible combination of AAPA and Sitte.

Regarding claim 17, which has been amended to depend from claim 16, applicants dispute the Examiner's contention that Sitte discloses at least two control signal return cables which are electrically joined at the electrical connector. As discussed above, Sitte's cable 760, 762 comprises only two signal wires 780, 782. Since one of these wires must be a signal supply wire, Sitte's cable 760, 762 can have at most one signal return wire.

Therefore, claim 17 is clearly patentable over any permissible combination of AAPA and Sitte.

Claims 6 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Sitte as applied to claims 1 and 2, and further in view of Adamson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,170,238). However, claim 6 has been canceled and claim 10 depends from claim 1. Therefore, to the extent the instant rejection is based on the Examiner's belief that claim 1 is unpatentable over AAPA and Sitte, claim 10 is patentable over any permissible combination of AAPA, Sitte and Adamson for the reasons stated above.

Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Sitte as applied to claim 14, and further in view of Longsdorf et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,006,338). This rejection is erroneous for two reasons. First, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, Longsdorf does not disclose two signal cables which each comprise a current loop. If the Examiner

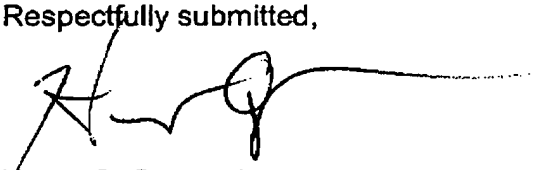
disagrees, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner cite more specifically the portions of Longsdorf which disclose this feature.

Second, even assuming *arguendo* that Longsdorf discloses two signal cables which each comprise a current loop, no suggestion or motivation exists to combine Longsdorf with Sitte in the manner suggested by the Examiner. As discussed above, Sitte's signal wires 780, 782 define a two-wire signal bus. In addition, each of Sitte's sensors is designed to comprise a similar two-wire signal bus so that the sensors can be connected to the signal wires 780, 782 in parallel (column 16, lines 26-29). This would not be possible if the signal wires 780, 782 comprised a current loop. Thus, the person of ordinary skill in the art would not be inclined to incorporate a current loop with each of Sitte's signal wires 780, 782 since to do so would make Sitte's system inoperative.

Therefore, claim 19 is clearly patentable over any permissible combination of AAPA, Sitte and Longsdorf.

For the foregoing reasons, claims 1, 3, 4, 8-13, 16, 17 and 19-22 are submitted as allowable. Favorable action is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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